

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DEAE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-13
JUSE-00 NSAE-00 CTME-00 SNM-05 TRSE-00 OES-07
OMB-01 HEW-04 DODE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00
INRE-00 EPA-01 /056 W
-----046577 090033Z /64
O 080017Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0093

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 07587

EO: 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, MX
SUBJECT: NARCOTICS - USE OF DYE TO MARK SPRAYED MARIJUANA

REF: 77 STATE 116616

1. EMBASSY HAS REPORTED PROGRESS OF DYE TESTS IN WEEKLY ERADICATION REPORTS. CONTRACTOR FORD, WORKING WITH MEXICAN OFFICIALS, HAS NOW COMPLETED TESTS WHICH INDICATE THAT THE RED DYE "RHODAMINE-B" DOES PRODUCE VISIBLE MARKS ON MARIJUANA WHEN USED IN FAIRLY HIGH CONCENTRATIONS. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT GREATLY REDUCED CONCENTRATIONS WOULD BE DETECTABLE UNDER ULTRA-VIOLET LIGHT OF TYPE COMMONLY AVAILABLE IN THE UNITED STATES AND WIDELY USED IN DISCO-TEQUES.

2. DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT SOME TIME AGO IT INFORMED THE EMBASSY (REFTEL) THAT RHODAMINE-B IS NON-TOXIC, NON-CORROSIVE, AND USED EXTENSIVELY BY ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTISTS IN STUDIES OF DRINKING WATER SUPPLIES. ONLY UNCERTAINTIES IN REFTEL CONCERNED POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON 2-4-D (NOT AN ISSUE IN THIS CASE SINCE IT WOULD BE USED WITH PARAQUAT AND FIELD TESTS HAVE SHOWN NO ADVERSE EFFECT),
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AND ADVERSE EFFECT ON MULTISPECTRAL PHOTOGRAPHY SYSTEM (MOPSS) WHICH HAS SINCE BEEN DISCONTINUED. EMBASSY HAS SINCE BEEN INFORMED BY THE MANUFACTURER (DUPONT) THAT PRODUCT IS WIDELY USED IN UNITED STATES AS A DYE AND HAS EPA APPROVAL FOR THAT PURPOSE.

3. IN VIEW OF ABOVE, EMBASSY PROPOSES TO SEND ATTORNEY

GENERAL FLORES A LETTER NOTING THAT FIELD TESTS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED AND HIGHLIGHTING ADVANTAGES OF USING A DYE (VISIBLE AID TO SPRAY PILOT; COULD DISCOURAGE FARMERS FROM HARVESTING SPRAYED FIELDS AS DYE WOULD BE VISIBLE ON PERSON AND CLOTHING; ASSISTANCE TO LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL IN IDENTIFYING THOSE INDIVIDUALS HANDLING MARIJUANA; IDENTIFIES MARIJUANA AS SPRAYED FOR POSSIBLE PURCHASERS AND USERS; WOULD SERVE AS AID IN LOCATING INTERNAL HELICOPTER PARTS DAMAGED BY HERBICIDE). LETTER WOULD OFFER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN PRATICAL ASPECTS OF USING DYE ON MARIJUANA AND NOTE THAT EXPENDITURES INCURRED BY GOM IN PURCHASING DYE COULD BE REIMBURSED UNDER PROVISIONS OF FIELD SUPPORT FUND AGREEMENT.

4. SINCE SUCH A LETTER COULD BE READ AS AN ENDORSEMENT OF ADDING RHODAMINE-B TO HERBICIDE SPRAYED ON MARIJUANA, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT CONCURRENCE BEFORE PROCEEDING.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT DEPARTMENT ADVISE ASAP IF IT CONCURS IN LETTER ALONG LINES SUGGESTED IN PARA THREE ABOVE. THOMPSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NARCOTICS, MARIJUANA, DYES, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 may 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MEXICO07587
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780195-0455
Format: TEL
From: MEXICO
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780583/aaaacstx.tel
Line Count: 84
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7de0b4a2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: 77 STATE 116616
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 jul 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2762966
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NARCOTICS - USE OF DYE TO MARK SPRAYED MARIJUANA
TAGS: SNAR, MX
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7de0b4a2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014